

SB00972, AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH.

To conduct a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the current behavioral health support system available to children throughout the state—

My name is AnnMarie Meacham Duffy, a certified school psychologist and member of Connecticut Association of School Psychologists (CASP). I would like to submit this testimony in support of SB 972 authorizing of a study evaluating the effectiveness of behavioral health services currently available to children and youth in Connecticut. This study should enumerate what services are presently available, what is the referral process when seeking to obtain services, and determine the average wait time to obtain appointments for referral as well as the delay between referrals and the start of mental health services.

Services providers need to be identified across settings ranging from early childhood programs, K-12 schools, community based program, child and family agencies and mental health programs. The study should survey the range and number services from early prevention and interventions to more intensive treatment options. This knowledge is needed to form a continuum of care which would facilitate building the capacity of existing services that have been proven to be effective. A continuum and coordination of services would be a cost effective way of maximizing services.